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Syria's Sectarian Divide Goes Regional

By Jason Ditz

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For the most part, the spillover violence in Syria has focused around the nation's direct neighbors, with Lebanon and Iraq facing growing wars of their own and tensions also rising in Turkey and Jordan.

But in addition to direct spillover, the sectarian tone of the Syrian war has rekindled long-standing tensions across the Middle East, and that covers a lot of nations that aren't directly involved in Syria.

A video of a top Sharia Law professor in Kuwait, Dr. Shafi al-Ajmi shows him urging Syria's Sunni rebels to kill Shi'ites, both militias and civilians. Kuwait is a nation with 30-40% Shi'ites, and they are needless to say riled up by this.

Similar stories span all of the GCC nations, where Sunni governments and religious leaders are openly backing the Syrian rebels, and the nations' Shi'ite minorities (or majority in the case of Bahrain) wonder if the age-old sectarian war is going to spread to them next.